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BOROUGH OF BEWDLEY.

Annual Reports

OF

Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector

FOR

1951

Printed by The Telford Press, Bewdley. Tel. 2164.

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WATER AND HEALTH COMMITTEE

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DR. R. W. MARKHAM, B.A., M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.
Medical Officer of Health

MR. S. J. ROWE, M.Inst.R.A., F.I.Hsg.
Borough Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector

MR. J. N. PITTS — Sanitary Inspector

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE BEWDLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the Health of the Borough for the year 1951.

In accordance with instructions from the Ministry of Health, the report is divided into the following sections:—

"A" Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

"B" General Provision of Health Services for the Area.

"C" Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

"D" Housing.

"E" Inspection and Supervision of Food.

"F" Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

SECTION "A"

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (in acres)	3,681
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1951) according to Rate Books	1,426
Rateable Value	£20,610
Sum represented by One Penny Rate	£81/1/6d.
Registrar General's estimate of resident population (mid 1951)	4,903

The principal sources of employment are carpet weaving at Kidderminster, light engineering and other similar undertakings outside the district, and a limited number employed on agriculture. In addition, a few are employed in nearby small coal mines.

Within the district there is a small needle factory where only female labour is employed, a saw mill, a factory processing animal feeding stuffs and seeds, and remaining from the old Bewdley industries, a brass foundry, rope works and leather works.

Vital Statistics for the Area.

Live Births.

	1951				1950		
	Total.	Male.	Female.		Total.	Male.	Female
Legitimate	71	36	35	...	81	37	44
Illegitimate	1	1	—	...	6	5	1
	72	37	35		87	42	45

The Live Birth rate per 1,000 estimated population of the Borough was : 1951 14.68 (1950 17.7).

The Live Birth rate for England and Wales was : 1951 15.5 (1950 15.8).

Still Births.

	1951				1950		
	Total.	Male.	Female.		Total.	Male.	Female
Legitimate	3	2	1	...	3	1	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—	...	—	—	—
	3	2	1		3	1	2

The Still Birth rate per 1,000 births (Live and Still) was : 1951 40 (1950 33.3).

The Still Birth rate for England and Wales was : 1951 0.36 (1950 0.37).

	1951				1950		
	Total.	Male.	Female.		Total.	Male.	Female
Deaths	86	43	43	...	68	31	37

The Death rate per 1,000 of the estimated population was : 1951 17.54 (1950 13.8).

The Death rate for the whole of England and Wales was : 1951 12.5 (1950 11.6).

Maternal Mortality.

There were no deaths of mothers associated with childbirth during the year.

The Maternal Mortality rate per 1,000 of the estimated population was : 1951 nil (1950 nil).

The Maternal Mortality rate for the whole of England and Wales was : 1951 0.79 (1950 0.86).

Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

	1951				1950		
	Total.	Male.	Female.		Total.	Male.	Female
Legitimate	4	3	1	...	4	2	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—	...	—	—	—
	4	3	1		4	2	2

The Infantile Mortality rate was : 1951 55.55 (1950 45.9).

The Infantile Mortality rate for England and Wales was : 1951 29.6 (1950 29.8).

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	8
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	—
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	—
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	—

Causes of Death.

Ref. No.		Male.	Female.
1, 2.	Tuberculosis.	—	—
3.	Syphilitic Disease	1	—
10, 11, 13, 14.	Cancer	5	3
15.	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	—	1
17.	Vascular lesions of Nervous System	8	12
18, 19, 20.	Heart Disease	12	14
22.	Influenza	3	3
23.	Pneumonia	1	—
24.	Bronchitis	5	1
25.	Other Diseases of Respiratory System ...	1	1
26.	Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	—	1
28.	Nephritis and Nephrosis	2	—
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases ...	5	5
34.	All other accidents	—	1
35.	Suicide	—	1
	Total ...	43	43

SECTION "B"

General Provision of Health Services for the Area

Bacteriological examinations of samples taken from producers and manufacturers, and all chemical examinations of food, milk and water are carried out by the Worcestershire County Council Laboratory. Bacteriological examinations of consumer samples of milk, water and ice-cream are undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory of the Worcester Royal Infirmary, in addition to the routine clinical pathology.

Ambulance Service.

This is provided by the Worcestershire County Council as Local Health Authority, and is based on Kidderminster.

Home Nursing and Health Visiting.

There are two District Nurses available in the Borough, one for Bewdley and one for Wribbenhall. From September, a whole-time Health Visitor has been working in the Borough.

Clinics.

An Ante-natal Clinic is held once a fortnight at the Wribbenhall Parish Room, a doctor being in attendance monthly.

An Infant Welfare Clinic is also held fortnightly with a doctor in attendance monthly, when Diphtheria immunization and vaccination are carried out.

Hospitals.

The following hospitals administered by the Midland Regional Hospital Board are available.

1. The Kidderminster General Hospital for general medical and surgical cases.
2. The Blakebrook Infirmary.
3. The Hayley Green Isolation Hospital for Infectious Diseases.
4. The Lucy Baldwin Maternity Hospital at Stourport.
5. The Croft Maternity Home.

Tuberculosis.

(1) **Treatment.**

A dispensary is held twice weekly at the Kidderminster General Hospital, and there are Sanatoria at Knightwick, and at St. Wulstans, Malvern.

(2) **Prevention and After-Care.**

Prevention of this disease is the responsibility of the County Council and is carried out under the direction of the County Medical Officer.

An After-Care Sub-Committee administers this service in this district in conjunction with the other districts in the Kidderminster Divisional Area.

Venereal Disease.

A treatment centre is operated at the Kidderminster General Hospital by the Regional Hospital Board.

Domestic Help Service.

Under arrangements made by the Local Health Authority, Home Help Service has been established in the district and is administered locally by the Women's Voluntary Service.

Section 47, National Assistance Act, 1948.

No action has been taken by the Council under this section during the year.

SECTION "C"

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

Water Supply.

1. The water supply has been satisfactory both in quality and quantity.
2. Samples of water for bacteriological analysis are taken monthly and for complete chemical analysis twice yearly.
3. The water is not plumbo-solvent.
4. No action was necessary for any form of contamination of the piped water supply.

5a. The number of houses supplied from the public water mains direct to houses is 1,368. Population served approximately 4,685.

5b. 50 houses are supplied from standpipes; population served 174. 18 houses obtain water from private supplies; population served 62.

Drainage and Sewerage.

The greater part of the district has a sewer available. Sewage is pumped to the disposal works used jointly by the Borough of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn Urban District Council and the Borough of Bewdley.

The drainage system of the district has proved satisfactory, but in November and December serious breakdowns occurred at the main pumping station, causing both pumps to be taken out of service. It had not proved possible to carry out repairs by the end of the year and temporary arrangements for disposal had to be made.

No serious nuisance has arisen and modifications and extensions have been carried out to meet the needs of housing development. A number of houses have been connected to the main sewer.

Despite all our efforts, several houses are still connected to the old culvert system and give rise to difficulties both in tracing and in rectifying the troubles arising.

SECTION "D"

Housing.

Eleven houses were completed by the Corporation during the year. Four houses were completed by private enterprise.

At December 31st, 1951, there were 431 applications for Council houses. The number of applications during the year amounted to 76, and it is discouraging to record that the rate of housebuilding is still insufficient even to maintain the number of applications at the same level. However, it is felt that when the housing list is brought up to date during the coming year, the situation will not appear quite so bleak.

Work has commenced on the new Springhill Estate with the erection of ten houses along the North East perimeter, five houses being completed and occupied by the end of the year. Permission has been obtained to extend this contract to include a further twelve houses.

Plans are being prepared of the general layout for the development of fifteen acres of the estate opposite Wribbenhall Church and work will commence during 1952.

The problem of the maintenance in a habitable condition of dwelling houses in private ownership is no nearer solution. Bewdley has a high proportion of old and sub-standard properties, and the continually rising costs of repair and maintenance have made it more difficult to persuade owners to do even the essential repairs. Recourse to statutory action was not necessary during the year but it might well be that the Council, in course of time, will be asked to exercise their statutory powers to remedy the more urgent defects, with the possible consequence of having to carry out the repairs in default of the owner.

Camping Sites.

The five licensed camping sites were inspected regularly by the Health Department and no serious nuisance discovered. The owners co-operated favourably with all requests to maintain their sites satisfactorily.

39 of the caravans and other structures on these sites are occupied permanently and informal action was taken to secure the repair of one such dwelling where the roof was leaking seriously.

Some progress has been made in conjunction with the County Council in order to secure more effective control of both licensed and unlicensed sites and enforcement notices were served on all sites and structures coming within the scope of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947.

As a result, it is anticipated that improved sanitary facilities, layout and general appearance at those sites where planning permission is granted, will be obtained in the future, provided that the planning authority work in co-operation with the local Sanitary Authority.

SECTION "E"

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

This work was carried out by the Sanitary Inspector during the year.

I should like to emphasise that in a town such as Bewdley, which caters for so many casual visitors during the summer months, all persons employed in the handling and preparation of food should be alive to the need for scrupulous care and cleanliness. It is felt that in spite of the nation-wide publicity given to the subject of "Clean Food", a great deal could be done to improve storage, washing up, personal washing and similar facilities in the local food shops, cafes, licensed premises, and other places where food is handled, prepared and served.

The general public also have a duty to perform in this matter of clean and safe food, inasmuch as any knowledge they have of unsound or contaminated food, or unhygienic practises in food premises, should be passed on to the Health Department. On a number of occasions information, usually several months old, of

foreign bodies found in various foodstuffs has reached the Department far too late for investigations to be made. It is hoped that the consumer will be more co-operative in future.

Food Poisoning.

There was no outbreak of food poisoning during the year.

SECTION "F"

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

Diphtheria Immunisation.

The number of children immunised during the year either at Clinics, Schools, or by the General Practitioners, was as follows:—

1.	Aged 0 - 4 years inclusive ...	69
2.	Aged 5 - 14 years inclusive ...	6
3.	Reinforcing Doses	76
	Total ...	151

At the end of 1951 the percentage figures of immunised children estimated in the two age groups 0 - 4 and 5 - 14 were 56% and 50.8% respectively.

No cases of diphtheria were notified during the year.

Notifications.

Cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year are shewn in the following table.

Disease	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to hospital	Deaths Total
Scarlet Fever	1	—	—
Measles	82	—	—
Whooping Cough	40	—	—
Acute Pneumonia	9	—	—

Tuberculosis.

The following table gives particulars of new cases of Tuberculosis and deaths from the disease in the area during the year.

Age Periods.	NEW CASES. Pulmonary. M.	F.	Non-Pulmonary. M.	F.	DEATHS. Pulmonary. M.	F.	Non-Pulmonary. M.	F.
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
45	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 & up	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
	6		—		—		—	

Conclusion.

The sanitary conditions and services provided in the Borough have been satisfactory during the year and it is most unfortunate that serious trouble should have arisen at the Sewage Pumping Station, though this has not been allowed to interfere with the effective drainage of the area.

The problem of old and unfit properties remains little changed since the previous year. In a few cases the repairs necessary to keep out rain and damp have been carried out, but in the main this has been a process of patching only.

It is to be hoped that in the not too far distant future the various Acts controlling rents will be adjusted to fit modern conditions and so make it possible for owners to bring their property up to a reasonable standard of fitness.

No advantage appears to have been taken of the Council's power to assist by means of improvement grants under the Housing Act, 1949.

I should like to thank the Mayor, Members of the Council, and the Council's staff for their help and co-operation during the year.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

R. W. MARKHAM,

Medical Officer of Health.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT

For the Year Ending 31st December, 1951

Housing.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. Four houses were completed during the year.

CORPORATION. Eleven houses were completed during the year.

The Medical Officer of Health has earlier reported on the progress made with the development of the new Springhill Estate.

SQUATTERS CAMPS. The weatherproofing of the Nissen huts referred to in my report for 1950 was completed in the early part of the year, and the work has so far proved generally satisfactory inasmuch as the severe penetrating dampness is concerned. However, there has been further deterioration in the structural condition of the timbers and boarding, especially of the huts at Blackstone, and having in mind the lack of facilities and substandard accommodation provided, any opportunity of demolishing the more unhealthy huts should be taken. One such hut at Blackstone was dismantled during December.

Rufuse.

House refuse is collected weekly in the town and once every fortnight in outlying areas, and is taken to the authorised tip.

In addition to house refuse, trade refuse is collected and disposed of, the average collection amounting to 15 cwts. weekly.

Salvage.

The collection of waste paper was resumed in March. The collection of other types of salvage was carried on throughout the year and the total value of all salvage is shewn as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Paper (15 tons, 6 cwts, 2 qrs.)	245	16	10
Glass (9 tons, 7 cwts.)	12	13	7
Scrap Metal etc.	14	12	0
Total	£273	2	5

Rodent Control.

There has been only one instance where rodent infestation is causing some concern, and at these particular premises regular treatments were carried out to keep the infestation to a minimum.

A summary of rodent infestations dealt with during the year is given below:—

Private dwellings	246
Business premises	19
Other infestations	11
Total	276

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Food preparing premises are inspected regularly to ensure the maintenance of a satisfactory standard of hygiene. Alterations have been carried out at two bakehouses, and improved personal washing facilities have been obtained at one of the larger provision stores.

A detailed investigation into the conditions prevailing in all licensed premises was commenced towards the end of the year.

Animals for human consumption are not slaughtered within the Borough.

Food stuffs condemned during the year were as follows:-

Tinned vegetables and soups (24 tins) ...	46 lbs. 2 ozs.
Tinned fruit (3 tins)	3 lbs. 15 ozs.
Tinned meat, poultry etc. (15 tins)	72 lbs 15 ozs.
Tinned fish (1 tin)	15 ozs.
Meat Pies (13)	13 lbs.
Cheese (25 boxes)	"Skive Cheese"
Sponge sandwiches (16).	

Tents, Vans and Sheds.

The additional control over these structures provided by the Town and Country Planning Act has in no way reduced the need for constant inspection by the Health Department to ensure that the relevant provisions of the Public Health Act are complied with.

A favourable co-operation exists between the Health Department and the owners of the five licensed sites, and no serious nuisance has arisen.

Inspections.

The following is a list of inspections carried out:—

Dwelling Houses	465
Infectious Disease	5
Factories	3
Dairies and Cowsheds	4
Food Premises	23
Licensed Premises	11
New Works and Buildings	58
Rodent Infestation	11
Tents, Vans and Sheds	61
Nuisances	13
Drainage	73
Water Supply	13
Other inspections	3
	743

I am,

Your obedient servant,

S. J. ROWE,

Sanitary Inspector.